

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 2, 3, 6, 12 and 13 have been amended as follows. Claims 14, 16, 20 to 23 and 27 to 90 are cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 4, 5, 7 to 11, 15, 17 to 19, and 24 to 26 are left unchanged. Underlines indicate insertions and ~~strikeouts~~ indicate deletions.

1. (original) A modular stringer for a staircase, the stringer comprising at least two matingly coupled step support units defining the stringer, said step support units each comprising a main structural body, a first mating structure extending substantially laterally from a first lateral side thereof and a second mating structure extending substantially laterally from an opposing lateral side thereof, said first mating structure of said step support unit being adapted to be matingly coupled with an adjacent second mating structure of an adjacent step support unit such that said adjacent unit is vertically offset therefrom.
2. (currently amended) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10, said first mating structure comprising a male mating structure and said second mating structure comprising a female mating structure.
3. (currently amended) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10, said first mating structure comprising at least one fastener integrally coupled thereto and said second adjacent mating structure comprising a corresponding fastening hole for each of said at least one fastener, said fastener engaging said second adjacent mating structure through said corresponding fastening hole thereby fastening said mating structures together.
4. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said fastener is a threaded bolt, said bolt being secured within said corresponding hole by a nut.

5. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said fastener comprises a transversal hole at a distal tip thereof, said fastener being secured within said corresponding hole by a securing pin fitted through said transversal hole.

6. (currently amended) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10, said first mating structure and said adjacent second mating structure comprising at least one pair of corresponding fastening holes, said pair for fastening said first and said adjacent second structures together using at least one fastener engaged through said pair.

7. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 6 wherein at least one of said corresponding fastening holes is threaded and wherein said fastener is a bolt threadingly engaged therein for fastening said first and said adjacent second mating structures.

8. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 6 wherein said fastener is a bolt secured within said pair by a respective nut.

9. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 6 wherein said first and said second mating structures define vertically oriented mating elements and wherein at least one of said corresponding fastening holes is a vertically elongated hole such that said first mating structure is vertically adjustably coupled and fastened to said adjacent second mating structure.

10. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 9, wherein once said first and said adjacent second mating structures are fastened together, an additional pair of corresponding fastening holes is created to further secure said fastening of said mating structures using an additional fastener.

11. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10 wherein one of said additional pair of corresponding fastening holes is a predefined fastening hole.

12. (currently amended) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10, the modular stringer further comprising at least one intermediary mating member for each two step support units, said mating intermediary member being adapted for matingly fitting between said first mating structure and said adjacent second mating structure for the coupling thereof.

13. (currently amended) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 10, the stringer further comprising an upper support unit and a lower support unit, said upper support unit comprising a mating structure for a mated coupling thereof with one of said first or said second mating structure of an uppermost step support unit of the stringer and a means for supporting the stringer from a top end thereof, said lower support unit comprising a mating structure for a mated coupling thereof with one of said first or said second mating structure of a lowermost step support unit of the stringer and a means for supporting the stringer from a bottom end thereof.

14. (cancelled)

15. (original) The modular stringer as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said structural body of said step support units is adapted to be fastened to a support structure lining said stringer and extending substantially parallel to said structural body.

16. (cancelled)

17. (original) A step support unit to be matingly coupled with at least one structurally similar adjacent step support unit such that said adjacent unit is vertically offset therefrom, the unit for the construction of a modular stringer for a staircase, the step support unit comprising a main structural body, a first mating structure extending substantially laterally from a first lateral side thereof and a second mating structure extending substantially laterally from an opposing lateral side thereof, said first structure comprising at least one mating element and said second structure comprising at least one complementary mating element complementary to said mating element of said first structure and vertically offset therefrom.

18. (original) The step support unit as claimed in Claim 17, wherein said mating element of said first structure defines same as a male mating structure and said complementary mating element of said second structure defines same as a female mating structure.

19. (original) A kit for erecting a staircase between an upper and a lower structure, the kit comprising at least two modular stringers each comprised of an equal number of step support units defining the stringers and a series of steps adapted to be mounted to said step support units, said step support units each comprising a main structural body adapted to support said steps thereon, a first mating structure extending substantially laterally from a first lateral side thereof and a second mating structure extending substantially laterally from an opposing lateral side thereof, within a same stringer said first mating structure of said units being adapted to be matingly coupled with an adjacent second mating structure of an adjacent unit such that said adjacent unit is vertically offset therefrom.

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (original) The kit as claimed in Claim 19, said first mating structure and said adjacent second mating structure of said same stringer comprising at least one pair of corresponding fastening holes, said pair for fastening said first and said adjacent second mating structures of said same stringer together using at least one fastener engaged through said pair.

25. (original) The kit as claimed in Claim 24 wherein said first and said second mating structures define vertically oriented mating elements and wherein at least one of said corresponding fastening holes of each said pairs is a vertically elongated hole such that said first mating structure is vertically

adjustably coupled and fastened to said adjacent second mating structure of said same stringer.

26. (original) The kit as claimed in Claim 25, wherein a relative height between successive steps in the staircase can be adjusted by vertically adjusting a relative height between corresponding successive step support units in said stringers.

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